Volume 1
Chapter 3

I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND WAS GREETED BY THE HORRID SMELL OF ROTTING CORPSES
IMMEDIATELY REMINDED OF WHAT HAPPENED RIGHT BEFORE I FAINTED, I THREW UP THE REMAINING CONTENTS OF MY STOMACH
UUUR RRGH HHH
HUUU UURRR RRRL
UGH !!
AND WHEN I LOOKED AROUND ME AFTER I'D FINISHED VOMITING
THE VILLAGE WAS NO MORE
ALL I COULD SEE WERE DEAD BODIES AND BURNT HOUSES

I PICKED MYSELF UP, BATHED IN THE RIVER AND MADE A FIRE
WHILE WARMING MYSELF AT THE FIRE, I REALIZED SOME-THING
I BET, IF YOU TURNED ME INTO GOLD COINS, YOU COULDN'T BUY A MEDICAL HERB WITH ME, THAT IS HOW WORTHLESS I AM AS A HUMAN
SO I'M NOT EVEN WORTH KILLING— HUH—
.....
A SAD EXCUSE OF A MAN
SO SAD I COULDN'T STOP THE TEARS FROM POURING DOWN MY FACE AGAIN

I BURIED THE DEAD VILLAGER'S BODIES
AFTER A SHORT REST..
SFX: GRIP
SFX: CLINK
MY BODY HURT ALL OVER BECAUSE I HADN'T DUG A HOLE IN A YEAR
SFX: WHOOSH
LET'S EAT
DINNER IS READY
ARE YOU DONE?

THE POOR OLD MAN WELCOMED ME INTO HIS HOME WARMLY
AFTER THAT WE HEADED TO THE BOAT-RENTAL MAN'S PLACE, WHICH, I ASSUME, ONLY ESCAPED THE ASSAULT BECAUSE IT'S A WAYS FROM THE VILLAGE
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
THANKS, OLD MAN
HERE DIG IN
TO THINK THAT, OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE, A SENILE OLD FOOL LIKE ME SURVIVED
SIGH
WHEN HE RETURNED, HIS HEART ALMOST STOPPED AT THE SIGHT OF THE CALAMITY THAT HAD BEFALLEN THE VILLAGE
HE THEN TOLD ME HOW HE WAS TAKING ONE OF HIS BOATS ON A TEST RIDE INSIDE THE CAVE, WHEN THE DEMONS ATTACKED

SO MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME
IT'S JUST YOU AND ME NOW
WITH THAT, THE OLD MAN WENT TO BED
I COULD NOT SLEEP A WINK
DESPITE THE LUXURY OF BEING ABLE TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN A BED AFTER SUCH A LONG TIME...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
COUGH COUGH
MAYBE IT'S THE SHOCK, BUT THE OLD MAN FELL SICK THAT NIGHT AND HAS BEEN BEDRIDDEN EVER SINCE
MAKING OFFERINGS TO THE GRAVES ..
SORRY FOR THE TROUBLE ...
I'VE SPENT THE LAST FEW DAYS NURSING THE OLD MAN,...
AND DOING MAINTENANCE ON THE OLD MAN'S BOATS IN HIS PLACE

.....
YOU WERE BLESSED WITH A SECOND CHANCE, SON. DON'T MIND ME AND DO SOMETHING WITH IT
IT WAS NICE OF THE OLD MAN TO SAY THAT, BUT I CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM HERE ALL BY HIMSELF...
I HAVE NEVER TRIED TO KNOW MORE
THIS VILLAGE IS ALL I HAVE EVER KNOWN
NO, THAT WAS A LIE. THE TRUTH IS THAT I'M SCARED OF LEAVING THE VILLAGE
THERE IS NO PLACE IN THIS WORLD FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME
ALL I'VE EVER DONE WAS LIE AROUND IN FRONT OF A BONFIRE AND AVERT MY EYES FROM REALITY

SFX: BLANCK
...
...I CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOU HERE ALL BY YOURSELF, OLD MAN...
WELL, SUIT YOURSELF. LIKE I SAID, YOU WERE GIVEN A NEW CHANCE, YOU DECIDE WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT
HE LOOKED AT MY FACE AND A HINT OF A SMILE SLID OVER HIS LIPS
I FELT LIKE HE HAD SEEN THROUGH MY EXCUSE AND MY CHEST CLENCHED AT HIS WORDS

ONE DAY, I DECIDED TO EXPLORE THE DEPTHS OF THE CAVE A BIT MORE WHILE TAKING A BOAT ON A TEST RIDE
AND SO I KEPT ROWING FURTHER INTO THE CAVE TO SEE WHAT IS INSIDE...
SFX: CREAK CREAK
UNTIL I FOUND A SMALL ISLE
SFX: CREAK CREAK
I GOT OFF THE BOAT TO TAKE A LOOK AROUND AND DISCOVERED A STAIRWAY LEADING TO A LOWER LEVEL.
PAPAS MIGHT HAVE USED THIS STAIRWAY WHEN HE ENTERED THE CAVE

IN RETURN, HE TOLD ME WHAT LITTLE HE KNEW ABOUT PAPAS
YOU SEE...
HMM...
I TURNED BACK AND TOLD THE OLD MAN ABOUT THE STAIRWAY
HE'S BEEN TRAVELING THE WORLD TOGETHER WITH PURPLE IN SEARCH FOR SOME-THING
APPARENTLY, PAPAS IS OF A PRETTY HIGH-BORN FAMILY...
I DON'T THINK THAT'S LIKELY
DOES THAT MEAN, WHATEVER PAPAS IS LOOKING FOR IS SOME-WHERE DEEP INSIDE THE CAVE?
THEN, WHAT DID HE ENTER THE CAVE SO OFTEN FOR...?
I SEE...
THERE CAN'T BE ANYTHING THAT VALUABLE INSIDE THE CAVE

WELL, SOMETHING IS HIDDEN INSIDE THE CAVE. THAT'S FOR SURE
HMM...
...WHAT COULD IT BE...?
.....
SINCE THEN, I REPEATEDLY ENTERED THE CAVE UNDER THE PRETENSE OF TAKING A BOAT ON A TEST RIDE BUT TURNED BACK AS SOON AS I REACHED THE STAIRWAY
SEVERAL DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE I TALKED TO THE OLD MAN ABOUT IT

BUT I DIDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO DESCEND DOWN THE STAIRWAY TO FIND OUT
FRANKLY, I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT PAPAS WAS DOING IN THE BACK OF THE CAVE REALLY BAD
OHH
SFX: KER-CHAK
WHEN I RETURNED TO THE SMALL HUT, THE OLD MAN TOOK OUT STUFF FROM A DRAWER AND PRESENTED IT TO ME
?
YOU'RE BACK
SFX: CLUNK
WHAT IS ALL THIS?
PERFECT TIMING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO GIVE THIS TO YOU
WELL, IT'S...

...
IT WAS A WHOLE SET OF GEAR INCLUDING A SWORD AND HERBS
IT WAS THE TRAVELING EQUIPMENT THE OLD MAN USED WHEN HE WAS STILL YOUNG
SFX: CLANG
BUT... YOU'RE STILL SO YOUNG
I WON'T TELL YOU TO LEAVE, SON
POTENTIAL, HE SAID— SOMEONE LIKE ME IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE POTENTIAL?
YOU MAY BE THIRTY, BUT THIRTY'S STILL YOUNG IN MY EYES AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A GIFT CALLED POTENTIAL

SFX: SLICE
SFX: CLINK
!!?
LOOK, POTENTIAL IS WORTH NOTHING IF YOU DON'T DEVELOP IT
ONLY BY GIVING IT A SHOT WILL A NOBODY EVER BE ABLE TO BECOME SOMEBODY
SFX: TOSS
THINK OF YOURSELF AS A NEW-BORN BABY IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO LATE FOR A FRESH NEW START, SON
THIS IS THE THIRD TIME I TELL YOU THIS
YOU WERE GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE
!!
SFX: CRUNCH

BUT I COULD FEEL IT. HIS WORDS HAD REACHED IN MY HEART AND MADE SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE STIR
COUGH! COUGH!
THAT'S ALL HE SAID BEFORE HE WENT BACK TO BED
SPRING HAS COME AND THE PLANTS ARE SLOWLY STARTING TO SLIP OUT OF THEIR SUMMER COLORS
AND TENDING TO THE GRAVES, AMONG OTHER THINGS
OTHER THAN THAT, THINGS ARE THE SAME AS BEFORE. I'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF THE OLD MAN'S BOATS FOR HIM
OHH HHHH HHHH HH!!
SFX: SLIDE SLIDE SLIDE SLIDE

ARE YOU FROM THIS VILLAGE?
!?
HEY! YOU OVER THERE
IS THIS THE VILLAGE WHERE LORD PAPAS USED TO LIVE IN?
PARDON THE DIRECT QUESTION, BUT...
YOU DON'T KNOW HIM?
I WASN'T SURE FOR A MOMENT, WHEN HE SAID "LORD", BUT THEN REALIZED THAT HE WAS ASKING ME ABOUT PAPAS
ERR

PAPAS' DEAD BODY WAS FOUND
HE THEN TOLD ME THAT IN SOME ANCIENT RUINS NORTH OF REINHART
HIS BODY HAD BEEN BURNT BY A MAGICAL SPELL TO THE POINT OF BEING ALMOST UNRECOGNIZABLE
I ASKED HIM ABOUT PURPLE
BUT BOTH THE PRINCE AND PURPLE WERE STILL MISSING .

SFX: SST
THE SOLDIER TOOK OUT A PIECE OF BURNT PAPER
WE DID FIND THIS THOUGH ...
SFX: RUSTLE RUSTLE
I ONLY MEANT TO TAKE A QUICK GLANCE, BUT...
SURE
CAN I TAKE A LOOK AT IT?
!!!
BUT THE WAY THINGS ARE NOW, I DOUBT ANYONE WILL CARE
IF ONLY THERE WAS AN ACQUAINTANCE OF LORD PAPAS I COULD SHOW THIS TO...

"PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MY SON"
ON THE PIECE OF PAPER
PAPAS
SNIFF
PAPAS MUST HAVE WRITTEN IT WITH HIS LAST STRENGTH JUST BEFORE HE DIED
WAS WRITTEN WITH BLOOD
SFX: SNIFF
WOULD I BE ABLE TO CARE FOR MY CHILD THE SAME WAY PAPAS DID, EVEN UP TO MY LAST BREATH?
IF I SHOULD EVER HAVE A CHILD OF MY OWN SOMEDAY...
THERE'S SOMETHING WRITTEN ON THE BACK. I HADN'T NOTICED IT BEFORE
?
SFX: SNIFF SNIFF
HM?

I GUESS THIS IS WHAT YOU CALL PARENT-CHILD LOVE...
"MY BELOVED FATHER", HUH...
MY MIND WAS MADE UP
SFX: CRACKLE
SO I FIGURED I'D, AT LEAST, HAND IT OVER TO A FRIEND OR ACQUAINTANCE OF HIS...
I WANTED TO GIVE THIS TO A RELATIVE OF HIS BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE WAS A REAL GLOBETROTTER. NO ONE SEEMS TO EVEN KNOW WHERE HIS HOME TOWN IS
ENTRUST THAT TO ME?
COULD YOU
?
UMM
SFX: CRACKLE

Appendix:

Characters in chapter 3:

Baki

Papas (Pankraz)

Purple (The Hera)

Boat man

Saldier

Lacatians in chapter 3:

- Santa Rosa (Wheatbrook)